

Instructional Leadership at University Level in Pakistan: A Multi Variable Based Comparative Study of Leadership Styles of Heads of Academic Departments

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Abstract

The paper aims to explore the leadership styles of Heads of Departments (HoDs) and opinions of the faculty about the leadership styles of their respective HoDs. Further it explores leadership style differences based on foreign qualification and gender of HoDs of the public and private sector universities of Pakistan. This exploratory descriptive research study uses random sampling technique. A sample of 120 Heads of the Departments and 240 faculty members representing various faculties and departments from five public and five private Sector universities of the Punjab are selected. The five point Likert Scale questionnaires based on Goleman's Leadership styles, having content validity & Alpha reliability (0.86), both for faculty and Heads of the Departments are used for data collection. Results of the study show certain differences between opinions of the faculty, leadership styles of Heads of the Departments based on sector and gender of the HoDs. The study concludes that leadership courses and training for Heads of the Departments; strong and free communication between HoDs and the faculty; and reflective practices by Heads of the Departments should be a practice in Higher Education of Pakistan.

Keywords: Instructional leadership styles, higher education, multi variable, public and private sector

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Introduction

Leadership is the pillar of any organization that upsurges the effectiveness of an educational set up. This effectiveness is manifold especially at the universities which are considered the source of knowledge production. Pakistan has more than 170 universities and degree awarding institutes (HEC, 2016) in public and private sector. This number seems to be insufficient as knowledge production, teaching-learning and research culture in the universities mainly depends on the university academic leadership (Bashir, Khalil, & Perveen, 2016). Many approaches to study leadership have emerged during last 50 years (Northouse, 2014). Among these, recent ones are Instructional Leadership (IL) in education and Emotional Intelligence (EI) based leadership styles.

Flath (2015) and Fullan (2011) see absence of training, job description, inadequacy of time to practice the instructional activities and load of paper work as major reasons of ignoring instructional leadership role of HoDs (Heads of the Departments). Higher education is responsible for public responsibility, harmony and a compassionate society (National Education Policy, Pakistan, 2009). Rehman (2011) argues that higher education is generally ignored and it faces mismanagement in the name of leadership resulting in the falling standards of academic excellence. Iqbal and Iqbal (2011) argue that a strong relationship exists between the leadership role and the quality of higher education.

Statement of the Problem

HoDs of the universities play various roles, one is that of an instructional leader. This role primarily focuses on monitoring and facilitating students' learning and achievement. Being leaders of an instructional process and activities, they may be termed as instructional leaders. In their leadership position, HoDs use various leadership styles to run the departments. Moreover, in different contexts, these styles differ due to gender, sector, and exposure to foreign qualification variables. Since, in Pakistan these variables are commonly found in HoDs so it is important to explore differences among leadership styles of the HoDs as instructional leaders of the universities in Pakistan.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are to:

1. Find out the self reported leadership styles of the Heads of the Departments and views of the faculty about leadership styles of their respective Heads of the Departments in the universities of Pakistan.
2. Explore the differences of instructional leadership styles between the Heads of the Departments of the public and private sector universities of Pakistan.
3. Find out the differences of instructional leadership styles between foreign qualified and indigenously qualified Heads of the Departments of universities of Pakistan.
4. Find out the gender based differences of instructional leadership styles between Heads of the Departments of universities of Pakistan.
5. Make recommendations in the light of the findings of the study.

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the self reported instructional leadership styles of the HoDs and opinions of the faculty of universities of Pakistan.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of instructional leadership styles of the Heads of the Departments of the public sector and private sector universities in Pakistan.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of instructional leadership styles of male and female heads of the departments of universities of Pakistan.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between instructional leadership styles of foreign and indigenously qualified heads of the departments of universities of Pakistan.

Justification and Significance

Research on educational leadership in Pakistan is found, but no significant work has been witnessed in the area of instructional leadership at the university level in Pakistan. There is a gap and space for research on instructional leadership at university level. The results of the study will be useful for Leadership Curriculum, Leadership Trainers, University Heads of the Departments, Policy Makers/Board of Governors of Universities/Board of advanced Studies and Curriculum, Higher Education Commission (HEC), University Leadership (Vice Chancellors & Deans) and Further Research studies. The study will also establish the cross-cultural basis of Goleman's leadership style.

Literature Review

All the definitions of leadership primarily refer to the characteristics, traits, responsibilities, styles and roles of a leader. Van de Grift (2014) sees educational leadership as an individual's ability to initiate improvement of organization to create a learning oriented climate to stimulate and supervise teachers in such a way that the latter may exercise their tasks as effectively as possible.

The early formation of leadership concepts are found in work of Max Weber (1947) and Great Man Theory (Bolde, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison, 2003). Trait Theory, emerged during 1930s, and is based on the idea that there are inborn attributes in the leaders that make them suitable to leadership (Northouse, 2014). Leadership Behavior Theories have two streams: interpersonal relationships and task-oriented behaviors (Yukl, 2012). Dierendonck (2011) is of the view that many researches have focused on the theoretical perspectives of servant leadership ignoring its cause and components. Team leadership or participative leadership focuses on studying the roles and processes involved in team building, empowerment and distribution roles (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2014)

Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) approach involves leadership as barter between leaders and workplace units (Northouse, 2014:90). Psychodynamic approach argues that the leader is aware of his/her own personality type as well as the personalities of the followers (Gabriel, 2016; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 2011). Initial work on Leadership Styles may be traced in the publications of Kurt Lewin (1939); McGregor's (1960), Michigan State University Studies of Managerial Grid; and Ohio State University Studies' Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), (Maccoby, 2007).

Goleman's major work is based on Emotional Intelligence including following six different leadership styles (Business Psychologist, 2012:1). 1) *The Visionary Leadership (also termed as Authoritative Style)* mobilizes the followers towards a joint vision. In fact a visionary leader motivates the team to strive ahead; 2) *The Coaching Leadership* creates a link between the wants of the followers and the organizational goals by holding long communication even going beyond the workplace; 3) *The Affiliative Leadership* creates connections that bring accord within the organization. In this very collaborative style, emotional needs of the workers are more important than the work needs; 4) *The Democratic Leadership* invites input from the followers not only when they are asked but also whenever they want in the process of decision making keeping; 5) *The Pace-setting Leadership* sets expectations for the followers by their own work examples. Such leaders, in fact are the good exemplifiers of the tasks they are dealing with; 6) *The Commanding/Coercive Leadership* gives clear directions based on his own thinking and knowledge, because he considers himself to be the authority. Such leaders expect full compliance to the directions.

Emotional Intelligence is also considered to be a combination of characteristics that are non-cognitive as well as of the competencies and skills enabling a person to succeed in meeting with the demands made from him. Merkwitz and Earnest (2011), Dadashi, Sharif and Doost (2012) argue that age, gender and organizational context has great impact on leadership styles of the leaders.

Instructional leadership theory shows up in 1980s with its roots in teacher leadership (Hallinger, 2009). Instructional Leadership is seen as leading the teachers, and Heads of the Departments are vital to the improved instruction and smooth management (Loeb & Horing, 2010). Hallinger and Murphy's (1987) Instructional Leadership model includes defining mission, managing program, and promoting academic climate.

Bambi (2015) says that heads of the departments of educational institutes have to perform both instructional and administrative/managerial tasks. Thrash (2015) identifies no significant differences among the leadership styles based on age and leadership experience of deans of universities. Gender differences in leadership have taken due attention during the past three decades and the idea of women in leadership is not such a distant concept; people have become entrenched to the idea (Lucas, 2015). Carley and Eagly (2015) showed that female leaders may not always fall into the typical concepts of feminine versus masculine leadership behaviours.

The literature discussed above clearly indicates the current situation of instructional leadership styles globally; and points out a serious situation of educational leadership in Pakistan. The literature above also establishes the bases for the researcher's development of a "self report" and "self-other report" instructional leadership style questionnaires.

Research Design and Tools

Population of this research included all Academic HoDs of universities/ higher education institutes of Pakistan. The study was delimited to the province of the Punjab with a sampling frame of 24 universities (excluding Professional universities and Degree Awarding Institutes). Using Multistage sampling technique, a sample of 120 HoDs, was selected from five public and five private sector universities. To triangulate the self reported data of HoDs, two faculty members (n=240) working under each HoD included in sample were also selected randomly. The study used researcher made five point Likert Scale questionnaires for HoDs and Faculty. These questionnaires were based on Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence based leadership styles. The Alpha reliability values of the tools were .86 for the Heads of the Departments and faculty members. Data was collected by the researchers themselves. Both descriptive and inferential statistics (independent sample *t*-test) were used.

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1

Difference of opinion between the HoDs and the faculty members regarding leadership styles

Leadership Style	HoD (n=120)	Faculty (n=240)	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>		
Coaching	31.99(3.40)	31.39(4.70)	1.253	.211
Affiliative	30.58(3.92)	29.76(4.59)	1.659	.098
Democratic	33.02(3.54)	31.56(5.12)	2.801	.005
Pace Setting	32.53(3.70)	31.07(5.02)	2.826	.005
Commanding	28.12(5.32)	29.21(5.61)	-1.762	.079
Visionary/Autocratic	35.35(4.01)	33.49(5.62)	3.232	.001

Table 1 shows that there is a significant difference between mean scores of the Heads of the Departments ($M=35.35$, $SD=4.01$.) and opinions of the faculty ($M=33.49$, $SD=5.621$) regarding the visionary leadership style, Democratic Style ($M=33.02$, $SD=3.54$, $M=31.56$, $SD=5.12$) and Pace Setting Style ($M=32.53$, $SD=3.70$, $M=31.07$, $SD=5.02$) as $p < .05$. Hence the researchers fail to accept the null hypothesis

1. HoDs tend to report higher scores than the faculty. Hence null hypothesis 1 is rejected. There is a significant difference of opinions between self reported leadership styles of HoDs and opinions of their faculty.

Table 2

Leadership Styles of the HoDs of the Public and Private Sector Universities

Leadership Style	Heads of the Departments of Universities				<i>t</i> -test	
	Private Sector (n=60)		Public Sector (n=60)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
Coaching	31.68	3.47	32.30	3.34	-.991	.324
Affiliative	30.47	3.60	30.68	4.25	-.301	.764
Democratic	33.97	3.36	32.07	3.49	3.035	.003
Pace Setting	32.82	3.23	32.25	4.12	.838	.404
Commanding	27.27	5.37	28.98	5.18	1.782	.077
Visionary	36.17	3.27	34.53	4.51	2.268	.025

Table 2 shows results of *t*-test. There is a significant difference ($p < .05$) between leadership styles of public sector and private sector HoDs on the democratic [Private ($M=33.97$, $SD=3.36$)], [public ($M=32.07$, $SD=3.49$)] and visionary [Private ($M=36.17$, $SD=3.27$)], [public ($M=34.53$, $SD=4.51$)]. Hence null hypothesis 2 is rejected. HoDs of private sector universities are more democratic and visionary as compared to the public sector universities.

Table 3

Leadership Styles of Foreign and Indigenously Qualified HoDs

Leadership Style	HoD		<i>t</i> -test	
	Foreign Qualified (FQ) (n=55)	Not FQ (n=65)		
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Coaching	32.02(3.58)	31.97(3.27)	.743	.458
Affiliative	30.49(3.85)	30.65(4.01)	.364	.716
Democratic	33.35(3.59)	32.74(3.50)	1.413	.158
Pace Setting	31.95(3.64)	33.03(3.70)	.783	.434
Commanding	28.13(5.57)	28.12(5.14)	-.460	.646
Visionary/Autocratic	35.00(4.12)	35.65(3.92)	.158	.875

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference ($p > .05$) between the mean scores of all leadership styles of foreign qualified and not foreign qualified HoDs. Hence null hypothesis 4 is accepted. Foreign qualification makes no difference in leadership styles of the HoDs.

Table 4*Gender Based Differences between Instructional Leadership Styles of the HoDs*

Leadership Style	Male	Female	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	(n=100)	(n=20)		
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>		
Coaching	32.15(3.26)	31.20(4.03)	1.140	.257
Affiliative	30.39(3.95)	31.50(3.73)	.990	.250
Democratic	32.86(3.44)	33.80(4.00)	-1.201	.281
Pace Setting	32.53(3.84)	32.55(2.94)	-.022	.983
Commanding	28.72(5.29)	25.15(4.53)	2.816	.006
Visionary/Autocratic	35.22(4.11)	36.00(3.46)	-.790	.430

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference ($p < .05$) between mean scores of male HoDs ($M=28.72$, $SD=5.29$) and female HoDs ($M=25.15$, $SD=4.53$) on commanding leadership style. Mean scores tell that female HoDs report themselves as less commanding than the male HoDs. Hence, the null hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Findings and Discussion

The study finds that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the Heads of the Departments' self reported data and the opinions of the faculty regarding democratic, pacesetting and visionary instructional leadership styles but surprisingly ratio of the scores of the faculty is consistent with the scores of the Heads of the Departments. It seems that HoDs rate themselves higher than what their faculty rates them. This could be exaggeration, over estimation or self confidence of the HoDs.

On Likert scale, it was found that Heads of the Departments of the private sector universities consider themselves as more democratic and visionary leaders than the Heads of the Departments of the public sector universities. According to Fullan (2011), certain differences may be due to organizational hierarchy and communication setup differences. The Heads of the Departments of the public sector universities are less visionary/autocratic leaders than the Heads of the Departments of the private sector universities; or it can be said that the Heads of the Departments of the private sector universities are more visionary leaders. One possible reason of these differences might be the culture of the institutes (Blase, & Blase, 2015) and work demand and work style of the private sector universities.

There is no difference between leadership styles of foreign and indigenously qualified HoDs, so foreign qualification of HoDs may not always be considered a criteria for good leadership.

As found by Carley & Eagly (2015) a significant difference was noted between male and female HoDs' leadership styles. Male HoDs in the study are found to be more commanding than female HoDs. Thrash (2009) has also found certain effects of gender on leadership styles of the HoDs.

Conclusions

In the light of the above mentioned findings and discussion, it can be concluded that there are great similarities among the results of this research and other research studies in this area. Most of the studies have also used Likert Scale for data collection. Gender and sector have impact on leadership styles, while foreign qualification has no impact on leadership styles. Goleman's Leadership styles are found valid across the cultural context and are found equally practiced in Pakistan.

Recommendations

Although there are great similarities between the results of this research and other international studies, yet in the context of Pakistan the following recommendations are made:

1. The authorities of universities should ask male HoDs to avoid being commanding all the times.
2. The authorities should appoint commanding leadership style HoDs only where it is needed, and only for a short time during some crisis.
3. Heads of the Departments claiming to use visionary, democratic and pace setting leadership style should have more open door meetings with their faculty.
4. There is a dire need to develop an understanding between the faculty and the Heads of the Departments to minimize the misunderstandings, so HoDs and university management should formulate certain policies and procedures/standards to promote open discussions and meetings.
5. Foreign qualification should not be considered the only criterion for appointing HoDs in universities by the appointing/decision making authorities.
6. The HEC and the ministry of higher education of the concerned provinces with the help of the universities should arrange leadership courses for the Heads of the Departments of both the public and private sector universities.

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